

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form* (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

historic name Willits House

other names/site number \_\_\_\_\_

2. Location

street & number 1035 SW Fillmore ☐ not for publication

city or town Topeka ☐ vicinity

state Kansas code KS county Shawnee code 177 zip code 66604

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this ☒ nomination ☐ request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property ☒ meets ☐ does not meet the National Register criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant ☐ nationally ☐ statewide ☒ locally. (☐ See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Richard Rankin  
Signature of certifying official/Title

D-SHPO

4/2/97

Date

Kansas State Historical Society

State of Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property ☐ meets ☐ does not meet the National Register criteria. (☐ See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of certifying official/Title

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that the property is:

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

☐ entered in the National Register.  
☐ See continuation sheet.

☐ determined eligible for the  
National Register  
☐ See continuation sheet.

☐ determined not eligible for the  
National Register.

☐ removed from the National  
Register.

☐ other, (explain): \_\_\_\_\_

Willits House  
Name of Property

Shawnee County, Kansas  
County and State

## 5. Classification

### Ownership of Property

(Check as many boxes as apply)

- ☒ private  
☐ public-local  
☐ public-State  
☐ public-Federal

### Category of Property

(Check only one box)

- ☒ building(s)  
☐ district  
☐ site  
☐ structure  
☐ object

### Number of Resources within Property

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

Contributing

Noncontributing

1

buildings

sites

2

structures

objects

3

Total

### Name of related multiple property listing

(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.)

N/A

### Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

0

## 6. Function or Use

### Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

Domestic: Single Dwelling

### Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

Domestic: Single Dwelling

## 7. Description

### Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions)

Late Victorian: Queen Anne

### Materials

(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation Stone: Limestone

walls Wood: Weatherboard, Shingle

roof Asphalt

other \_\_\_\_\_

### Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

Willits House

Name of Property

Shawnee County, Kansas

County and State

## 8. Statement of Significance

### Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- ☒ **A** Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- ☐ **B** Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- ☒ **C** Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- ☐ **D** Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

### Criteria Considerations

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

Property is:

- ☐ **A** owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- ☐ **B** removed from its original location.
- ☐ **C** a birthplace or grave.
- ☐ **D** a cemetery.
- ☐ **E** a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- ☐ **F** a commemorative property.
- ☐ **G** less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

### Narrative Statement of Significance

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

## 9. Major Bibliographical References

### Bibliography

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

### Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- ☐ preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
- ☐ previously listed in the National Register
- ☐ previously determined eligible by the National Register
- ☐ designated a National Historic Landmark
- ☐ recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey  
# \_\_\_\_\_
- ☐ recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # \_\_\_\_\_

### Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

Architecture

Community Planning and Development

### Period of Significance

1887-1916

### Significant Dates

1887

### Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

N/A

### Cultural Affiliation

N/A

### Architect/Builder

Parnham, J.B. - Builder

### Primary location of additional data:

- ☒ State Historic Preservation Office
- ☐ Other State agency
- ☐ Federal agency
- ☐ Local government
- ☐ University
- ☐ Other

Name of repository:

Kansas State Historical Society

Willits House  
Name of Property

Shawnee County, Kansas  
County and State

## 10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property less than 1 acre

### UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1	15	267140	4325340
Zone	Easting	North	ing
2			

3			
Zone	Easting	North	ing
4			

☐ See continuation sheet

### Verbal Boundary Description

(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

### Boundary Justification

(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

## 11. Form Prepared By

name/title Carol Grant

organization \_\_\_\_\_ date December, 1996

street & number 1035 SW Fillmore telephone \_\_\_\_\_

city or town Topeka state KS zip code 66604

### Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

#### Continuation Sheets

#### Maps

A **USGS map** (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.

A **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

#### Photographs

Representative **black and white photographs** of the property.

#### Additional items

(Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

### Property Owner

(Complete this item at the request of SHPO or FPO.)

name Carol & Gerald Grant

street & number 1035 SW Fillmore telephone \_\_\_\_\_

city or town Topeka state KS zip code 66604

**Paperwork Reduction Act Statement:** This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 *et seq.*).

**Estimated Burden Statement:** Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Projects (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.



WILCITS HOUSE  
 TOPEKA, KS  
 UTM Coordinates  
 15 267140  
 4325340

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The Willits House (1887) is located at 1035 SW Fillmore in Topeka, Shawee, County, Kansas. The building permit issued June 10, 1887 estimated the cost at \$2800, Lots 357 & 359, Young's Addition. The 2-1/2 story dwelling was to be 32' front and 48' deep with a shingle roof. An upstairs sleeping porch was added in 1920. The ground level back porch was enclosed in 1993.

The Queen Anne style, wood frame house is surmounted by an asphalt shingled hip roof intersected by fish scale front gables and stands on a limestone foundation. The building has an east orientation, measuring 28' across the front (north to south) and 50' overall from front to back (east to west). The building is irregularly shaped, having bays on the east, north, and the south, a narrower dimension at the back which included a porch on the southwest corner. The upstairs sleeping porch was added in 1920 by the owner, L.B. Willits. The downstairs back porch was enclosed in 1993 by the present owners, Carol and Jerry Grant, to provide a sunroom off the kitchen.

The house has a roughly rectangular plan with a high-pitched, multi-gabled roof and an asymmetrical facade. Wooden eaves and eave troughs (Yankee gutters) are around the perimeter of the roofline and have ornamental wooden projections, roof brackets, medallions, an fretwork supporting the eaves. The building has a full-width single story front porch with a gabled fish-scaled facade, and curvilinear returned eaves. The porch has square wood supports on square back pedestals with limestone caps and an open rail around the perimeter. These features are typical of the Queen Anne period and Victorian style house.

The structure maintains a high degree of integrity. The changes include asphalt shingles, construction of a sleeping porch on top of the back porch in the 1920's, and enclosure of the back porch to make a sunroom. Baths were installed in two of the upstairs bedrooms. Wooden lap siding covers the body of the building. Massive, square brown brick pillars topped by square wooden pillars support the one-story gable-roofed porch that spans the building's facade. Fish-scale shingles cover the gable ends of the dormers and front porch. Asphalt shingles replace the original wooden shingles. The entire structure sits on top of a full basement made of thick limestone walls and concrete floor.

Windows are primarily double hung sash. Bay #1 on the south is a 45 degree polygonal unit with narrow 1/1 double hung sash (both levels) and large double hung sash in the center (both levels). Bay #2 on the front has triple 1/1 double hung sash with leaded glass in the upper section, upper level 1/1 double hung sash. Recessed Bay #3 has a 12 light, 8 panel door, the upper level has a 1/1 double hung sash. Bay #4 has a multilight, leaded glass stationary window. A brick chimney rises from the center of the house.

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Concrete steps, flanked by brick abutments, lead up to the building's front porch, in line with the building's off-of-center front door.

The building retains its original floor plan and detailing with the following exceptions:

1. A sleeping porch was constructed on top of the back porch located at the southwest corner of structure in 1920.
2. The ground level back porch was enclosed with glass insulated windows and screens in 1993.
3. The "baby's room", an alcove in the front upstairs bedroom was converted to a bathroom that is left open to the bedroom (not made into a separate room).
4. A small bathroom was constructed off the large upstairs south bedroom at the west side of the bedroom. An old leaded glass window was placed between this bathroom and the upstairs sleeping porch to allow natural light to enter the bathroom.
5. A closet was built at the rear of the front entry foyer, probably in the 1920's.

The interior of the house features a large beamed living room with leaded glass windows on the east, a large dining room with polygonal bay, and three bedrooms and one sitting room upstairs. The wood work is heavy detailed oak with a natural finish. Interior doors are paneled doors made of oak with large pink brass ornate hinges and brass doorknobs and hardware. These features are original to the house. Floors are yellow pine which have been overlaid with oak flooring at some time in the past. Exceptions are the dining room, family room, kitchen, and one upstairs bedroom, which all appear to originally have had oak flooring that was removed at some time. These rooms are currently carpeted or have other floor covering.

Two sets of paneled oak pocket doors with original brass hardware separate the dining room from the living room and the dining room from the family room. The main staircase is along the north side of the foyer/living room area and features a unique wooden handrail and newel posts as well as two landings with a stationary leaded glass window at the upper landing. A steeper back staircase (servant's stairs) leads from the family room to the back of the upstairs hallway. An outside stair at the northwest corner of the house leads to a door off the upstairs sitting room. The upstairs floor plan features a central hallway. The third floor attic is lit by dormer windows. This area was never finished nor used as living space.

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The house is located on a corner lot backed by an alley. There may have been a previous structure at the back of the lot, but this has been replaced with an existing enlarged garage which is entered from the alley.



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The Willits House (c. 1887) is being nominated to the National Register for its historical association with the growth and development of Holliday Park and for its architectural significance as an example of a Queen Anne style residence. Located in the Holliday Park area of Topeka, the house is representative of types of residences constructed in the neighborhood during the 1880-90s. The house has a steeply pitched irregularly shaped roof, a dominant front gable facing east and cross gables facing north & south.

The northeastern portion of Holliday Park was part of Original Town created in 1856; the remainder was annexed by the city in 1889. The street patterning in the area follows the grid pattern established by the city founders who used the south river bank as the alignment point for the platting of the Original Town. When Colonel Joel Huntoon platted his eighty-acre homestead, the configuration for the new streets in the survey area were altered. A civil engineer, Huntoon believed the compass points should be the guide in platting a town site. By establishing a "true" north orientation, a variety of angles were required to create the new street alignment.

An 1873 plat map of the area listed eight residences. The 1897 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map is the first map that shows any major development of the neighborhood. The map depicts residences existing on more than fifty percent of the real estate while the 1913 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map indicates at least eighty percent of the area established. A comparison of the 1897, 1913, and 1935 Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps reveals that residential construction moved westward, initially along Tenth Street and southward along Tyler, before sweeping through the neighborhood in a wedge shape. Furthermore, many of the earlier residences were replaced by larger dwellings.

The establishment of the Holliday Park neighborhood coincided with the national trend of heterogeneous urban development. Initially, urbanites were more concerned about reducing the travel distance to work rather than whether the neighborhood was socially homogeneous. The Holliday Park neighborhood is only five blocks from Kansas Avenue, the commercial axis of the city. This proximity attracted would-be residents from all economic levels. This social diversity was further encouraged by individuals who constructed a few houses for speculation. Where in other parts of Topeka or in other cities, tract development might include entire blocks or additions, the City's building permit records indicate contractors in the neighborhood limited their building resources within the area during a specific time to four or six residences. Other dwellings were built by original homeowners according to their own needs and financial income. Analysis of building permits, appraiser records, census records, and city directory listings indicate the majority of existing structures in Holliday Park were erected by 1916 and the original settlers of the neighborhood created a balance reflecting the various socioeconomic levels, from char-women to corporate and government leaders.

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The 1914-1915 construction in the area coincided with a mini-building boom in Topeka. In 1915, approximately 350 homes were built in the city. This number represented an increase of nearly twenty percent over the previous year. The history of Holliday Park is complemented by the assortment of architectural styles contained therein. Historically, the neighborhood developed primarily from the 1890s through 1916 by the laboring and white-collar executives of Topeka. This eclectic mix of homeowners created an architectural neighborhood comprised primarily of housing built of National Folk, Queen Anne, Colonial Revival, Prairie School and Craftsman. Examples of the Queen Anne style may be found within the Holliday Park survey area. A few outstanding examples of Queen Anne residences are 927 Munson and 1021, 1035, 1105, 1211, 1213, 1263, and 1269 Western.

On November 10, 1886, Findley L. Stevenson and wife sold Lots 357 and 359 to J. B. Parnham (Register Of Deeds). Mr. Stevenson was issued a building permit in 1886 to build a new home on Lots 353-355 which are directly north of the Parnham lots. Mr. Stevenson was a contractor and builder in Topeka and the 1887-88 City Directory showed him residing at 1029 (1031) Fillmore. Subsequent City Directories show him residing at 212 Tyler (1888-89 Directory) and 1012 Western (1890-91 Directory). J. B. Parnham was issued a building permit (Vol. 2, 1884-91) on June 10, 1887 for a new dwelling on Lots 357 and 359 at an estimated cost of \$2800 and an estimated date of completion of July 15, 1887. The dwelling was to be 32' front, 48' deep, 2-story wood with shingle roof. At that time J.B. Parnham was Superintendent of Construction at the State Capitol. (The 1886-87 Ks. Gazetteer Bus. Directory stated that the new Capitol, when finished, will be a magnificent building, costing \$3,000,000 but its progress is slow. The east and west wings are completed--work was still in progress in 1891.) Mr. Parnham was the proprietor of the Kaw Valley Marble Works in Leavenworth in 1867. (Andreas, Vol 1). He is shown as a resident at 1035 Tyler and 1269 Western in the 1888-89 City Directory and at 1119 Tyler in 1890-91. We are led to believe that he constructed, lived in, and sold several houses during these years; however, he did not reside at 1035 Fillmore as it was sold weeks after the building permit was issued. According to the History of Kansas his main residence continued to be in Lawrence where he was very active in that city's social and political activities. The original house numbering of the Willits house was 1033 but this was later changed to 1035 (Sanborn Insurance Maps).

On July 13, 1887 J. B. Parnham sold the house to Naneti Hazlett (Register Of Deeds). Naneti was the second wife of H.H. Hazlett and already widowed when she purchased and lived in the house from 1887-1895. (1888-89 and 1893-94 City Directories). The 1895 Census records show Nannetta P. Hazlett as being age 45, white female (Vol. 347, p. 696). She then moved to 925 Quincy with her stepson, Harry H. Hazlett (1896-97 City Directory). His deceased father, Harry Harrison (H.H.) was a general merchant until he died in Abilene, KS. His mother, Elizabeth Mooney Hazlett was a talented musician

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who died in Newark, Ohio. The son, Hal Harrison (Harry), is listed in 1905 Who's Who in Topeka as H.H. Hazlett, M.D., born in Newark, Ohio, April 8, 1874, educated at the Salina Military School and graduated from the Barnes Medical College, St. Louis, MO '97. He came to Kansas in 1879, and was married to Gertrude Price Cooper at Abilene on October 6, 1906. Dr. Hazlett served as a quartermaster sergeant in the Spanish American War and during the World War was in the draft recruiting service of the regular US Army, 1898. He was a member of the Kansas State and Shawnee County Medical Societies and the Elks and has been practicing in Topeka since 1897. (Illustriana Kansas, p. 499, and 1905 Who's Who in Topeka) The 1899-1900 City Directory shows Harry, surgeon, at 613 Kansas Avenue.

On April 1, 1895, N. Hazlett sold the house to Geo. W. Smith (Register Of Deeds). There were several George Smiths in Topeka at this time, but documents shows this Geo. W. Smith residing at 1033 (35) Fillmore to be a master mechanic for the AT&SF Railroad (1896-97 City Directory). The 1899-900 City Directory lists him as Superintendent of Machinery at the Santa Fe Pacific Railway and still residing at 1033(35) Fillmore. The 1905 Census (Vol. 410, p. 14, 5-1) shows G.W. Smith as being a machinist, age 58, white male, born in New York, from Illinois.

On March 10, 1908 Geo. W. Smith sold the house to James D. Gardner (Register Of Deeds). James D. Gardner was the oldest son of the prominent Gardner family in Meriden (Meriden Ledger, July 1895). His father, M.A. Gardner, came from the Hoosier state with his wife and two sons and settled in Meriden on April 6, 1878, engaging in the mercantile business. He was the first mayor of Meriden and re-elected for three successive terms; the Gardner family was highly esteemed in Meriden for their business and community involvement. W.A. Gardner, the younger son, was an accomplished musician, playing the organ and entertaining in concerts for years. In 1890 he succeeded his father in the general merchandise store. J. D. Gardner was the older son of Mayor Gardner and was one of Meriden's foremost young men for sixteen years. He moved to Topeka in 1895. Born in Navarre, Ohio, February 15, 1857, he received his education at the Roanoke Classical Seminary in Roanoke, Indiana. In 1878 he came to Meriden with his parents and engaged in farming and handling stock. He continued to own the farm and other property in Meriden after his move to Topeka. He was married June 28, 1882 to Anna Arnold of Thompsonville.

In Topeka James Gardner was a stock buyer for the Chas. Wolff Pkg. Company and was described as one of the most enterprising and efficient employees of that company. The Meriden Ledger says "Mr. Gardner's prosperity affords a fine example of

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what industry, integrity, and ability will accomplish. He is a decidedly temperate man and a member of the A.O.U.W. Lodge of Meriden." His previous residence in Topeka was at 1351 Fillmore (1907 City Directory). By 1910 the house numbering had been changed from 1033 to 1035 and the 1910 City Directory shows James and his wife, Anna, still residing here. The 1913 Sanborn Insurance Maps list our block for the first time with the current house # of 1035. The 1916 City Directory continues to list James and Anna at 1035 and his occupation as a travel agent for the Chas. Wolff Packing Co.

Charles Henry Wolff, Sr. Was a prominent name in Topeka's group of early business builders. A butcher by trade, he built an industry which in 1918 stood as one of the largest of its kind in the state. Born in Bavaria, he came to America as a 13 year old boy and in spite of disadvantages and handicaps achieved in America both wealth and an honored name. He learned the butcher's trade at Leavenworth and in 1876 moved to Topeka and opened a meat market at 530 Kansas Avenue. With his cardinal principles of cleanliness and honesty, he went forward toward success and began butchering for other retailers. Having conferred with some men of capital who extended him financial aid in 1886 he organized the Charles Wolff Packing Company and became its first president. The first plant was a two-story structure partly of brick construction and the plant killed from fifty to seventy-five hogs and a few cattle each week. Before his death in 1913 approximately 3,000 hogs and 300 cattle were slaughtered every week, and more than \$2,500,000 were expended through the business every year in the purchase of livestock. In time the original plant gave way to the eight-story brick and concrete structure which was a complete packing plant in every mechanical and sanitary detail. It was a model of its kind in efficiency and adaptation and employed from 250-300 hands becoming one of the chief industries of Topeka. He was interested and took part in public affairs, found time for family and friends, and joined the Masonic order and Elks Lodge. (Kansas Special Limited Edition, 1918, p. 163-164)

On July 31, 1919 ownership was transferred from James to Anna G. Gardner, his wife. On January 23, 1920, the house was sold to Anna M. Willits (Register of Deeds, Shawnee County). The Lincoln and Anna Willits' family occupied the house from 1919-1954. On May 18, 1920 Bldg. Permit #1534 (Vol. 1, Yr. 1917-21) was issued to L. B. Willits (b. 1860) for the addition of the upstairs sleeping porch to the dwelling. Add. D, Ht.: 2. Wood walls, comp. roof with an estimated cost of \$275 and estimated completion date of July 1, 1920.

The Encyclopedia of Pennsylvania Biography, Kings and Queens of England lists Lincoln Brady Willits as the second of eight children born to Thomas E. Willits and Charlotte H. Ives Willits. It traces the Willits genealogy line back several generations to Richard Willet

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(spelled with an "e" at that time) and Mary Washburne's marriage in 1650. Richard (1618-1664) was baptized in 1619 in Somersetshire England and came to America by way of Boston about 1640-45. He moved to Stratford, Connecticut and then to Hemstead, Long Island as early as 1650. Mary Washburne (1620-1713) was Richard's second wife and Mary was a direct descendant of Charlamagne (742-814).

The 1890 Portrait and Biographical Album of Jackson, Jefferson and Pottawatomie Counties, Kansas, pp. 573, 575-576 gives a splendid lithographic engraving of the residence of Charlotte Willits & Sons in Jefferson Co. Kan. along with a delightful sketch of the "Willits Bros": The Willits Bros. are described as enterprising young farmers of a fine farm of 150 acres of land secured by their father, Thomas Willits, during the early settlement of Jefferson County. Since his death (1881) the two sons have operated successfully and instituted valuable improvements, besides clearing a debt of \$1,800. They have erected convenient modern buildings and availed themselves of the most approved machinery. It is now considered one of the finest farms on the Kansas bottoms, very fertile and admirably adapted to grain and stock-raising. They are interested in and exhibit some of the finest horses in this part of the country. Among them is the famous "Baywood" who is considered the fastest stallion raised in the State of Kansas. Lincoln B. is a prominent member of the Kansas State Horse Breeders' Association. The Willits family is of English descent, and Lincoln's father and grandfather, were also fine horse breeders. The parents, Thomas and Charlotte, came overland to Kansas in the spring of 1865, traveling with a team and wagon, crossing the Mississippi at Burlington, and the Missouri at St. Joseph, and purchased the land which his sons now own. He was in feeble health and much of the labor and responsibility of improving the new farm fell upon his wife and the two sons. He served as Justice of the Peace for many years, was a Universalist in religious belief, and a Republican. Charlotte Ives Willits lives at the old homestead with her sons and shares an equal interest in the property and business. Emery I. and Lincoln B. are the two sons of eight children and are active in this county. Lincoln B. is the Clerk of the School Board. Both sons occupy high positions socially and their home is one of the most attractive within the limits of Kentucky Township.

Lincoln had six sisters in addition to the aforementioned brother, Emery. Two of the sisters, Katie and May died in childhood; Gertrude married Charles Heise and Etta married George Frisbie; Maud and Rose never married. Lincoln B. married Anna Ingrahm Horning on October 16, 1899, and they had one daughter, Dorothy, born in 1903. Lincoln retired from the farm at 60 years of age in 1920 and moved to 1035 Fillmore. Dorothy married Norman Palmquist in 1901. City directories during this 35 year period continue to show members of the Willits family living in the house. The 1902-05-16 City Directories show Maud and Rose Willits residing at 927 N. VanBuren, however, they

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subsequently moved into the Willits House and continued to reside there for many years with Lincoln and Anna. The 1924 City Directory shows Maud Willits, designer, Courtney Millinery Parlors, Lincoln B, farmer; Anna, householder; Rose, clerk, Dorothy, student. The Holliday Park Survey showed other 1924 roomers as Julia Frisbie (Julia was the daughter of Etta Willits Frisbie (sister of Lincoln) and George Frisbie, Mary Musson (no relation that can be determined), and Mary Heise (Mary was the daughter of Gertrude Willits Heise (sister of Lincoln) & Charles Heise. The 1929-30 City Directory shows Lincoln and Anna Willits with Maude, Engel Clothing Co., and Rose with no occupation listed. The 1935 City Directory shows Lincoln B. Willits (Anna M.) householder, Maude Willits clerk Pelletiers, Rose Willits. The 1940 City Directory shows the same listing with the addition of Rose's occupation as "steno".

Anna M. Willits died February 12, 1946, at age 83. Topeka Daily Capital 2-12-46 Obituary: " Mrs. Anna M. Willits, 83, of 1035 Fillmore, died Monday afternoon at a local hospital. She was born in Pennsylvania, June 24, 1862, but had lived in Grantville and Topeka most of her life. Survivors include her husband, Lincoln B. Willits of the home; a daughter, Mrs. Dorothy Palmquist; a brother, N. A. Ingram of Washington D.C., and several nieces and nephews." The 1950 City Directory lists Willits, Lincoln B. householder, Maude emp Pelletiers, Rose, Russell W. Inst. Sgt. Sr. Army Instr. No relation can be verified for the Russell W. resident.

Lincoln B. Willits died May 11, 1954, at age 93. A Topeka Daily Capital Obituary: "Lincoln B. Willits, 93, resident of Kansas for 90 years, died Tuesday morning in a Topeka hospital. His home was at 1035 Fillmore. He was born November 6, 1860 at New Boston, Ill., and came to Kansas when he was three years old, settling near Grantville. He was a farmer in the Grantville and Newman communities until 1906 when he moved to Wabaunsee County. He retired from the farm and moved to Topeka in 1920. He was a member of the Central Congregation Church. He was married November 16, 1899, to Anna Horning, who died in 1946. He is survived by a daughter, Mrs. Dorothy Palmquist of the home; and three sisters, Miss Rose and Miss Maud Willits of the home and Mrs. Gertrude Heise, Hutchinson. Funeral services will be at 2 p.m. Thursday at the Wall-Diffenderfer Mortuary with burial in Grantville Cemetery." The 1955 City Directory shows the last listing of a member of the Willits family, Norman E. Palmquist and Dorothy (Willits) Palmquist residing in the house.

Beginning in 1956 the house became true apartments when Josephine Gordon purchased the house. J. Gordon lived here until her death in 1968. The 1956-74 City Directories list J. Gordon and Max Pruitt (1958); J. Gordon and George Gettemuller (1959-60), and J. Gordon and Rose Blevins (1965-68). J. Gordon was a widow with no children and when she died the house was left to her niece and nephews in Missouri.

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Neighbors remember the house was a pretty soft pink with white trim, very neatly kept while J. Gordon owned it. Rose Blevins continued to rent and live in the upstairs for a few more years with the City Directories showing she and Katherine Weldon (1969), and Rosella (Mrs. L.M.) Blevins (1970). The house continued to be a rental for a few more years. Robert and Carolyn Mauer visited the house in 1993 and told the present owners that they had rented the downstairs apartment from 1972-74. A chiropractor purchased the house, painted it blue, and conducted business from his office on the downstairs level. Ginny and Harlan Hapsnagel then purchased the house and subsequently sold it to Don Kern (1031 Fillmore) who rented it out as two apartments once more.

In December 1989 the present owners, Jerry and Carol Grant, purchased the house from Don Kern and converted the house from apartments back to a family dwelling. At that time the back servant's stairway was disclosed and opened up for use. The walls in the hidden area had only one layer of wallpaper which leads one to believe that it had been covered up for many years. Many layers of wallpaper were found in other areas of the house. Original ceiling beams across the living room were also restored after having been covered with dropped ceiling tiles for many years. Lighting fixtures typical of the earlier period were installed and extensive restoration of the woodwork and wall coverings have enhanced this home's original beauty. This house now functions as a bed and breakfast as well as the Grant residence and has welcomed many guests with warmth to its comfortable interior.

The Willits House is of classic Queen Anne architecture and is similar to many other houses in the Holliday Park area of Topeka. The house has a steeply pitched, irregularly shaped roof with a dominant front gable facing east and cross gables facing north and south. In addition, the roofline features a couple of small dormers on the east and south rooflines. The porch extends for the full width of the front of the house and has a gabled roofline. "Over half of all Queen Anne houses have a steeply hipped roof with one or more cross gables. Most commonly there are two cross gables, one front-facing and one side-facing, both asymmetrically placed on their respective facades" (McAlester, 263).

The house is of frame construction and has a prominent bay on the south side. The house is irregular in plan, and could be considered to have bays at the front and north sides. The home was constructed with the balloon framing technique. "Irregularities in ground plan were facilitated by the widespread adoption of balloon framing techniques in the late 19th century. Queen Anne houses make full use of this freedom by incorporating frequent bay windows and towers, as well as through the use of wall insets or projections which provide random changes in the horizontal continuity of the wall plane" (McAlester, 265-266).

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Gables, including the porch, have wood shingles in a fish-scale pattern. In addition a strip of fish-scale wood shingles about two feet wide encircles the house just below the eaves.

Other architectural details common to Queen Anne architecture include the front windows. The living room windows consist of a large center window flanked by two narrow windows. Each window has a large lower pane with a small leaded glass pane at the top. "Window sashes usually have only a single pane of glass; a frequent elaboration has a single large pane surrounded by additional small or rectangular panes on one or more sides" (McAlester, 266).

Merrill Gage, a renowned sculptor, was raised next door (1031) to the Willits House and did much of his earlier work in the carriage house at the rear of his lot (the Findley Stevenson home mentioned in the beginning which now belongs to Don Kern). The Holliday Park district is a historic section of Topeka founded in the 1860s and a brief summary of this area follows. Building permits and records show that Holliday Park growth started around 1860 and continued thorough 1940. Early city founders platted the land in the Holliday Park District with crude instruments (stakes, string and a compass) thus producing a pie-shaped park at 12th and Western/Taylor. Many of the city's wealthiest residents built homes in the Holliday Park area. Location was the chief factor in the district's growth as the neighborhood was only a few blocks from the center of activity and a very convenient place to live and raise families; the district was a popular place to live for everyone, from secretaries to janitors, doctors and lawyers, even Supreme Court Justices. The area exhibits a mixture of homes ranging from grand Queen Annes to modest little bungalows. Beautiful parks, lawns and gardens filled the Holliday Park District.

World War II brought with it housing crunches, men leaving to go to war, and many wives (some who became widows) needing sources of income. Many large homes were converted to apartments. More modern areas were being developed in Topeka and attracted Holliday Park's more affluent residents. The decades of 1960-1980 proved to be transitional for the Holliday Park neighborhood. Many larger homes fell prey to modern apartment complexes or vacant lots as the homes became harder and harder to maintain. Crime was on the rise and the problems and needs of the central city fell prey to shopping malls and suburbs. People left the inner city for the newer areas. The 1980s started a turnaround for Holliday Park. Work began restoring the old covered up homes to reveal architectural details that were accentuated and enhanced with contrasting shades of paint. Roofs, porches and landscaping were replaced. Vacant houses were being reclaimed and turned back into family dwellings once more. Several bed and breakfasts located in this area and the Society for the



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Preservation of Holliday Park was formed and meets on a regular basis to promote and work on preservation of the neighborhood. A traditional Christmas tour of homes in the Holliday Park District is an annual fund-raiser for preservation and enhancement efforts of the Society.

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**VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION**

The nominated property is located on Lots 357 and 359, Young's Addition, on SW Fillmore in Topeka, Shawnee County, Kansas. The property is bounded to the west by an alley, the east by SW Fillmore, the south by 11th Street, and to the north by adjacent property lines.

**BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION**

The boundary includes the property historically associated with the house. A garage to the west by the alley is not included in the nomination.